

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 13, 2009

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## Macedonia's Ambassador Comment's on latest 'Name' Talks

Calls for Invitation to upcoming NATO Summit

Washington, DC – Zoran Jolevski, Ambassador from the Republic of Macedonia to the United States of America, commented on the latest round of so-called 'name' talks aimed at resolving the 18-year dispute Greece has had with Macedonia over its name.

Ambassador Jolevski – appointed last fall by the Government of the Republic of Macedonia to represent the country's interests in these talks – was in New York at the behest of UN Special Envoy for the talks Matthew Nimetz on Tuesday and Wednesday, together with Greek representative Ambassador Ademantios Vassilakis. No new proposals were put forward by Nimetz but the meeting was an opportunity for the two sides to discuss modalities for going forward.

According to Ambassador Jolevski, the meetings were conducted in a friendly and positive manner. The ambassador pledged, once again, that Macedonia is ready and willing to find a solution to the issue and expressed hope that a compromise could be found. The Ambassador stressed that it would be useful and helpful if Greece would support an invitation to Macedonia for the upcoming April 3 & 4 NATO Summit, thus creating a better atmosphere for finding a solution.

The Ambassador also told the Voice of America, Macedonia Program that "I also said that the identity and dignity of Macedonia's citizens must be protected, since they have been committed to the reform process in meeting conditions for the NATO membership invitation. We did not open the latest Nimetz proposal and did not debate on essential issues, but on the further developments in the negotiating process. Discussions also tackled the creation of a favorable atmosphere between the two countries for the purpose of facilitating the solution."

The representatives agreed to meet again at a future date. Macedonia holds presidential and mayoral elections in March and Greece holds elections for the European Parliament in June.

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